

# Google Israel CEO optimistic about future

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Google Israel will not wither away after initial excitement like Yahoo! did upon arriving here, Google Israel CEO Meir Brand said in an interview.

"We'll be here, for sure, in five years," Brand told the Israeli business newspaper Globes. "I met (Google owners and co-founders) Sergey Brin and Larry Page, and I know that they're serious about business in Israel.

"It's an open secret that Google's owners are very interested in Israel," Brand told the newspaper. "They have widespread ties with a great many people (here)."

Brand deflected comparisons to Internet giant Yahoo!, which arrived here with fanfare and promises of a Hebrew-language portal. When the dot-com bubble burst, so did Yahoo! Israel's. The company fired its employees here and pared down operations severely, the newspaper said.

Declining to predict how many Israelis the company would employ in two years, Brand told the story of meeting his counterpart in Great Britain. He said she started by herself about four years ago, as he is starting now, and now manages 120 employees, the newspaper said.

Brand also declined to reveal Google's earnings target for the coming year.

He said the company plans to make Israel on par with countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, where revenue from search

engine advertising is 50 percent of the total online ad revenue. Israeli search engines currently generate 15 percent of the total.

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